

Puttin' on the Dance

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Starting, repairing, or revivifying a dance series

There are five necessary components for a superb dance: dancers, caller, musicians, the sound persons, and the dance organizer. Each has specific responsibilities. It is impossible to hold a good dance without all five components fully carrying out their particular responsibilities.

Your Motivation

\$ Remember the Larry Jennings principle: "The dance belongs to the organizers,"
but also remember that the dances are given for others.

Make it what you want, if the dancers will come.

\$ The dance may be for others, but do it only if it gives you joy and satisfaction, or it will burn you out.

Organizing Process

Vision: When we are successful, this dance will be: _____.

Mission: What we will be, do, for whom, why we are doing it, and solicit help.

Goals: In order to do that, we will: _____.

Objectives: For each goal, specify a time frame to begin and complete.

Actions: For each objective, list the steps you will take to achieve it, by the deadline.

Evaluate: At each stage, were you successful in achieving?

Key to using this process: Begin at the beginning

Do every step. Always create them in order from top to bottom.

Vision

Must on its face seem desirable to the dancers and would-be dancers

Mission Statement

Must provide:

• **What:**

• **How:**

• **Problem identification and solution:**

- **Solicits help:**

Mission statement must:

- Stand alone
- Is successful (only) when you demonstrate successfully to the dance community
 - (a) There is a perceived need or desire
 - (b) Your proposal will fill that need
- Guide all subsequent steps

Goals:

\$ Are the hardest to create; take your time and make them robust.

Write goals that deal with:

- a. Frequency
- b. Location
- c. Level
- d. Styles of dance
- e. Price
- f. Musicians/callers
- g. "Rules" or not

\$ Look to see if each action, objective, and goal, in fact, does implement the step above it.

If you can answer "yes" at each level, congratulations.

\$ Continuously evaluate how you are doing. Ask dancers, callers, musicians, other organizers.

\$ In summary:

◇When starting a new dance series use this process working from Vision to Actions.

◇When trying to solve problems with an existing series, use this process working in reverse order.

One suggestion for your dance series (since I am turning over the floor to David Millstone)

\$ **Follow the Molly Katzen* principle:** "...because specialness is worth it." Go for the "wow!" factor. Look for things that will make your event outstanding in dancers' minds. The greatest complement will be "I don't know what it is, but this dance series is different (or better, or more fun, or _____)."

* Katzen, Molly. (1971). The Moosewood Cookbook, ISBN 0-913668-68-0
